CHAPTER 1

THE MUSEUM AND THE CITIZEN

TONY BENNETT

Museums are complex, many-sided institutions which serve the communities in which they are located in a number of ways. One of the things they do, Michael Frisch has suggested, is to 'offer to citizens, visitors, and school children ... a "civic presentation of self"' (Frisch, 1989: 38). They offer a public and official version of history — and it might be the history of a city, nation or state — through which a particular set of meanings is organised. What does it mean to be an Australian? Or a Queenslander? Or a Sydneysider? Museums offer answers to questions like these, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly. In doing so, they provide a set of resources through which important questions bearing on our roles, identities and rights as citizens can be posed and debated.

These resources may be used in a variety of ways depending on the circumstances and contexts in which museums are visited. Some of these uses may be highly formalised. One of the main examples that Frisch draws on to illustrate the kinds of 'municipal self-portraiture' that museums of urban history can offer is the Museum of the City of New York. When I visited this museum in 1994 its role in cultivating civic identity was evident from the number of school parties using the museum displays as props for communicating a sense of local historical identity. In the lessons on which I eavesdropped, teachers used reconstructions of the interiors of wealthy New Yorkers' 17th - 19th century homes for question-and-answer sessions designed to show both how life in the city had changed and how, beneath the changes, the city had remained the same place with a culture and a history shared by all its inhabitants. More typically, it is left to the visitor to draw such connections on the basis of the objects displayed, the accompanying text, and the issues highlighted in guidebooks.

Whatever the context of the visit, however, it is also clear that the kind of 'civic presentation of self' that museums offer is liable to considerable fluctuation and variation. What should appropriately be included in such civic presentations of self? To whom should such presentations be addressed? In 1994, the 'Pride Equals Power' display at the Museum of the City of New York addressed such questions in encompassing New York's gay community within its 'civic presentation of self'. The display celebrated a succession of gay and lesbian public demonstrations from the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969, perhaps the most important founding moment in New York's gay movement, through to the Lesbian and Gay Pride Weeks of the 1990s.

On the other side of Central Park, however, the American Museum of Natural History, whose masculinism has been discussed by Donna Haraway (1992), offers a reminder of a period when museums addressed a citizenry conceived in more singular terms. The 1936 dedication in the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial envisages the citizen as male and heterosexual in the itinerary that it plots from youth to manhood.

YOUTH

I WANT TO SEE YOU GAME BOYS
I WANT TO SEE YOU BRAVE AND MANLY
AND I ALSO WANT TO SEE YOU GENTLE
AND TENDER

BE PRACTICAL AS WELL AS GENEROUS
IN YOUR IDEALS KEEP YOUR EYES
ON THE STARS AND KEEP YOUR FEET
ON THE GROUND

COURAGE HARD WORK SELF MASTERY
AND INTELLIGENT EFFORT ARE ALL
ESSENTIAL TO A SUCCESSFUL LIFE

CHARACTER IN THE LONG RUN
IS THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN THE LIFE
OF AN INDIVIDUAL AND OF NATIONS ALIKE

MANHOOD

A MANS USEFULNESS DEPENDS
UPON HIS LIVING UP TO HIS IDEALS
INSOFAR AS HE CAN

IT IS HARD TO FAIL BUT IT
IS WORSE NEVER TO HAVE TRIED
TO SUCCEED
ALL DARING AND COURAGE
ALL IRON ENDURANCE OF MISFORTUNE
MAKE FOR A NOBLER TYPE
OF MANHOOD

> ONLY THOSE ARE FIT TO LIVE
> WHO DO NOT FEAR TO DIE AND NONE
> ARE FIT TO DIE WHO HAVE SHRUNK
> FROM THE JOY OF LIFE AND THE
> DUTY OF LIFE

Its particular construction of the relations between masculinity and citizenship to one side, this text serves as a timely reminder that, for much of their history, museums have not included women among the citizens they have addressed. Either that or they have not accorded them the same cultural rights and status as men. This is one of the groups which museums have under-represented among the citizens whose cultural needs they are to serve. Colonised indigenous populations; migrant black peoples; men and women without property; non-heterosexual men and women are among the groups which, at various points over the past two hundred years, have not been accorded equal citizenship rights and status in either the practice or the governance of museums.

Viewed against this background, an important development of the past twenty years or so is the more inclusive concept of citizenship which now — at least in theory —governs the practices and policies of museums. The three main requirements now typically placed on museums in this regard are:

1, That they should portray the cultures of all sections of society;

2, That they should make themselves equally accessible to different ethnic groups, classes, and genders; and

3, That their governance should reflect the make-up of society in these regards.

Yet an equally important tendency has been the recognition that museums may legitimately offer 'civic presentations of self' in relation to communities which lay claim to cultural identities and rights which are distinct from those of a national or territorially-defined citizenry.

A few blocks south of the Museum of the City of New York, the Jewish Museum offers a quite different 'civic presentation of self'; one concerned with the organisation and maintenance of a transnational identity for a diasporic community. The orientation text for the main display makes its purpose clear enough:

> *Culture and Continuity* proposes that Jews have been able to sustain their culture, despite wide dispersion and sometimes tragic circumstances, by evolving a culture that was adaptable to life in many countries and under various conditions. The exhibition examines the dynamic interaction between continuity and change: the Jewish people's ability to revise tradition and recast identity from antiquity to the present, while holding fast to a set of fundamental concepts and values.

In its portrayal of the diasporic dispersal of Jewish peoples, and, in the modern period, of the complex interplay between their national civic roles and identities and the maintenance of their distinctively Jewish roles and identities, the display probes the relations between nationalist conceptions of civic identity based on the exercise of sovereignty over a bounded territory and diasporic constructions of a civic role and ethos in ways which complicate any simple limitation of the civic roles of museums to the question of the part they play in the formation of national cultural identities.

The point is reinforced by walking north from the Jewish Museum to El Museo del Barrio, concerned with organising a sense of transnational Latino identity. Carry on north into Harlem, to the Museum of the American Indian, where the empty display cases describing the objects once exhibited there, but since removed at the insistence of their tribal owners, give eloquent testimony to the claims to cultural autonomy of First Peoples.

In the space of just a few blocks within the same city we find quite different conceptions of the relations between museums and citizens, and quite different conceptions of the kinds of civic selves which museums should seek to portray and fashion. Although not so conveniently placed within walking distance of one another, the same range and variety of museum practices is evident in Australia. The development of specific ethnic museums, like the Jewish Museums in Melbourne and Sydney; of museums like the Migration Museum in South Australia specifically committed to hybridic constructions of civic identity; of Aboriginal keeping places; of museums like the the Women's Hut, concerned exclusively with women's issues and culture: it is clear from all these developments that Australian museums now play a highly varied and pluralised role in relation to processes of citizenship formation. The citizen they seek to cultivate is not cast in a single image, and there is no single prevailing concept of civic self-fashioning they should help to foster and promote.

General principles regarding the civic role of museums that would recruit more or less universal support in modern western societies are:

1, The museum should be the collective public property of a citizenry, administered for the public good in ways which ensure that it is accountable to the democratically elected representatives of that citizenry;

2, All eitizens should have equal rights of access to museums and to the information they contain;

3, Museums should foster civic identity and belonging on the part of all members of society; and

4, The eultures, beliefs, and ways of life of all groups within a soeiety should be represented within museums, and be aeeorded equal worth and value.

These ideas apply just as mueh to the relations between a loeal museum and the citizens of the loeality eoneerned as they do to national museums. They also apply, with different degrees and kinds of stress and emphasis, to all museum types, including muscums of natural history. However, as we have also suggested, these principles are not natural to the museum. To the contrary, they have developed gradually over the past two hundred years. A brief survey of the changing coneeptions of the relations between museums and eitizens will thus establish an appropriate historieal context for eonsideration of the ways in whieh these prineiples inform eontemporary museum practices and policies.

Sinee the museum is an imported European form, and sinee the view that there is an important relationship between museums and eitizenship is essentially European in origin, we look first at the European development of muscums to identify how this influenced early Australian museum debates and practices. More recent developments within Australia, however, show how those European ideas are now being revised in adjusting museum praetiees to take account of differentiated cultural rights, especially those of Aboriginal Australians, in ways which limit the eultural sovereignty of national eitizenries and, in their plaee, reeognise rights based on other prineiples.

MUSEUMS AND CITIZENSHIP: CHANGING CONCEPTIONS

Museums and Civic Culture

Convention attributes the genesis of the first three prineiples summarised above to polieies developed for the administration of the Louvre during the Freneh Revolution. This is only a partial truth. Some of these ideas had been 'in the air' throughout the latter part of the 18th century. The view that museums should be used to promote a sense of civic identity, for example, had been current throughout most of the 18th eentury. Indeed, it was this coneept that was responsible for a number of royal eolleetions of art being opened to the public to ineuleate a sense of identity with, and loyalty toward, the nation. The Austrian Hapsburgs who, in 1776, opened the *Gemaldagelerie* in the Belvedere Palaee to the public, thus laying the foundations for what was to become Vienna's Kunsthistoriseh es Museum (Kaufmann, 1994). Similar proposals had been made in relation to the Louvre from as early as 1747 and, by 1778, a eommission had beeu established to advise on opening the grand gallery of the Louvre as a publie museum (Pommier, 1989). When, in 1789, the Louvre was seized in the name of the people and when later, in 1793, it was opened to the public, the result was thus anything but a complete break with the past. In effeet, polieies that had been in plaee for using royal art-treasures as a means of eultivating a national eivie identity in whieh the nation was defined as the monarch's realm were redeployed to promote a eivie identity in which the nation was defined as the territory of a republiean citizenry.

Polieies developed in relation to the Louvre and other museums in the French Revolution brought together three of the modern prineiples regarding the eivie role of museums and erystallised these in ways that had not been true before.

These might conveniently be summarised as follows:

1, The seizure of the Louvre in the name of the people and the extensive debates regarding appropriate forms for its demoeratic governanee enuneiated new prineiples for the ownership and administration of cultural property;

2, New prineiples of publie aeeess were also established by opening the Louvre to the public, without let or restriction, for a set number of days a week; and

3, In interpreting the art eontained in the Louvre as a testimony to the greatness and glory of the French state and people, rather than of the monareh, eultural resources were used in new ways to promote a degree of self-consciousness among and for a eitizenry defining itself in new, demoeratic terms. The nation which the art on display now made manifest was not 'the nation as the king's realm' but 'the nation as the state — an abstraet entity in theory belonging to the people' (Dunean & Wallaeh, 1980: 454).

Similar policies were developed in relation to administration of national monuments, espeeially in support Alexandre Lenoir reeeived in proteeting such monuments from revolutionary vandalism and collecting them in the *Musée*

d'antiquitiés et monuments francais (Vidler, 1989).

It is equally important to be clear about the limitations which characterised museum policies developed in the revolutionary era. These related principally to women. While included among those admitted to the Louvre and allowed to sketch there, this was about as far as women's rights in the cultural sphere extended. Although they had been active and often leading participants in the major political events of the Freneh Revolution, there soon followed a radical curtailment of women's civic rights (Landes, 1988). Women thus played little, if any, role in the governance of museums which addressed themselves mainly to the task of forming a republican brotherhood. Pommier suggested that, like the Pantheon, the Louvre remained a 'sanctuary of the example', a place for embodying and representing exemplary civic virtues through the portrayal of model deeds, exploits and individuals. The symbolic coinage it drew on was — again, like that of the Pantheon — overwhelmingly masculine. Women were not recruited for the new forms of civic republican identity museums sought to fashion. Except for the portrayal of Liberty as a woman, women were also not accorded an especially important role in representing the civic virtues that the visitor was meant to emulate. This ascription of second-rate civic rights to women has remained a central limitation of the museum throughout much of the 19th and 20th century.

The example of the Louvre was widely followed throughout provincial France (Sherman, 1989) as well as in many of the countries brought under French rule as a result of the Napoleonic conquests (Bazin, 1967). This helped both to develop and to disseminate the first three of the new principles regarding the civic role of museums outlined above. In some contexts, however, these ideas were often opposed because of their association with the French Revolution.

The 'Museum Idea'

This was especially true of Britain where campaigns to open the major state collecting institutions to the public and make their administration more democratically accountable were successfully resisted by conservative forces until well into the 19th century. There are a number of reasons for this:

1, Those responsible for the administration of the most prestigious collecting institutions reacted negatively to the French experience of public access. Sir Anthony Pannizzi, Principal Librarian at the British Museum, argued that opening the French National Library to the public had only resulted in the admission of

> ... downright idlers, mostly, and persons influenced by political excitement, who go to read books which very few people read here; they read books on politics and on religion, and such topics; when I say religion, I do not mean for religion, but against it ... (Report, 1850, Minute 747).

Even worse, it seems, ladies had developed a habit of coming to read at the British Museum and this alone, Pannizzi argued, formed

> a great objection to admitting everybody indiscriminately into the library (Report, 1850: Minute 59);

2, The views of art and culture which prevailed at the time provided no basis for making cultural resources more widely available to the general public. The influence of the civic humanist tradition was especially important in this respect (Barrell, 1986). Developed in the 18th century by writers like Anthony Shaftesbury and transmitted into the 19th century by Sir Joshua Reynolds, this tradition attributed an important role to the fine arts in cultivating civic virtue on the part of a free and equal citizenry. At the same time, however, it limited membership of that citizenry to propertied men, and especially to landowners. Only property holders, it was argued, could develop the capacity to reason and generalise from their contact with the exemplary virtues depicted in historical paintings and sculptures to cultivate a public-minded civic consciousness; and

3, The mechanic or artisan was explicitly denied this capacity. The requirements of their occupations, it was argued, limited the mental abilities of those who worked with their hands to the capacity to repeat simple technical operations and did not equip them with the ability to reason from the particular to the general. Women were held to be governed by a similar limitation, but, in this case, by nature rather than because of their occupations.

The civic role of museums was thus very limited in its social compass. Labourers and women were not included among the citizenry for whom art and culture might play a role in cultivating civic virtues, while, albeit for different reasons, they were also regarded as unable to interpret works of art and culture in ways that would facilitate such virtues. There was, accordingly, no basis for thinking that making cultural resources more broadly available by providing for public access to art galleries, museums and libraries would produce any tangible civic benefits.

The emerging ascendancy of the civic role of museums was evident, in Britain, in the 1840s and 1850s when enabling legislation allowed local councils to levy rates in order to establish public museums, galleries and libraries. The same period saw the establishment of London's South Kensington Museum which articulated a number of important new principles:

1, As Britain's first state-supported museum allowing the public unrestricted entry, the South Kensington Museum also embodied new principles of public administration in being governed through the newly-established Department of Science and Art rather than through a board of trustees (Pearson, 1982: 30-34);

2, The Museum also functioned as the organising centre for a national network of public museums — all placed clearly under the control of municipal governments — which resulted from the enabling legislation of the 1840s and 1850s.

In some measure, these developments were a response to demands based on new democratic conceptions of cultural rights. These had been articulated by democratic and radical opinion in the early decades of the century and such arguments found their way into the vocabularies of liberal reformers who proved to be the crucial force in translating new views of museums' civic functions into practice. For Edward Edwards, one of the most important advocates of public libraries, access to cultural resources was a 'matter of right, and not matter of favour' (Edwards, 1869: 56). For the greater part, however, reforming sentiment was activated more by a mixture of liberal and utilitarian calculations regarding the benefits that would accrue to the state from providing public museums and art galleries than by any generalised support for the democratic principle of free and universal rights of access to public cultural resources.

The nature of these benefits was most clearly summarised in 'the museum idea' championed by Sir Henry Cole, the founding Director of the South Kensington Museum and the most influential museum and arts administrator of the period (Cole, 1884). In accordance with this idea, the museum was to be charged with a new civic responsibility that it was to discharge by producing a new kind of self-reforming person. Its civic task, in this regard, was particularly directed toward the workingman. Exposed to the refining influence of art and culture, it was suggested, the workingman would be tempted away from the public house and set on a career of self-improvement through which he would be transformed into a responsible, thrifty and prudent head of household. The following passage, outlining what was expected from the opening of the Sheepshank Gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1858, gives some idea of the civilising influence it was hoped museums would exert.

> The anxious wife will no longer have to visit the different taprooms to drag her poor besotted husband home. She will seek for him at the nearest museum, where she will have to exercise all the persuasion of her affection to tear him away from the rapt contemplation of a Raphael. (Cited in Physik, 1982: 35)

What had changed to make this an intelligible expectation in the mid-century? Two reasons stand to the fore:

1, The influence of new ways of thinking about the population meant that the conduct and behaviour of the workingman became a new kind of moral and political problem. For, in accordance with the stark alternatives posed by Malthusianism — depopulate or perish — it was seen as essential that the workingman be inducted into a new form of life, one governed by sobriety and sexual restraint rather than by drunken debauchery, if the survival of the species was not to be threatened; and

2, If it was thought that exposure to art and culture might help the workingman make this passage, this was because receptivity to the improving and civilising influence of art was no longer held to be dependent on a particular kind of intellectual capacity. Rather, under the influence of Romanticism, art and culture were now imbued with the capacity to sooth, refine and civilise conduct. As such, their influence was exerted experientially rather than simply intellectually. Their purpose was to help the individual to overcome such disabling oppositions as that between reason and the emotions and so to cultivate a new kind of wholeness.

Precisely because of this, however, this new conception of the museum's civic function entailed its civic focus centring mainly on men.

For, in Romantic conceptions, women were, again by their nature, held to be nearer to the ideal wholeness of personality that the work of art was to help cultivate and so less in need of the museum's assistance in this matter than their more vulgar and less harmonious menfolk (Vogel, 1987).

In this view, then, the museum was to help make better citizens principally by bringing about the moral reform of the workingman and so making him a better husband, worker and father with an in-built capacity for regulating his sexual conduct

and leisure habits in ways which would contribute to the greater good of civilisation. In place of arguments based on principles of cultural rights, the museum's civic task, in this view, was to help form a male citizenry that would better serve the needs of the state and the economy.

THE 'NEW MUSEUM IDEA'

A similar orientation characterised what was perhaps the most distinctive late 19th century understanding of the museum's civic task. This was embodied in 'the new museum idea' — so called because, like the original 'museum idea' championed by Henry Cole, it stressed the public educational responsibilities of the museum. It did so, however, in a different context in which questions regarding the kind of schooling in civics the museum was to provide, and whom it was to provide such a schooling for, were posed and answered in new ways. Its most important distinguishing characteristics were:

1, The currency of 'the new museum idea' was an international one in ways that had not been true of its predecessor. Actively promoted throughout the British colonies by the Museums Association (Coombes, 1988), it also had an active and influential advocate in America in the person of George Brown Goode, the Director of the US National Museum at the Smithsonian Institution (Goode, 1895); and

2, The kind of citizen which 'the new museum idea' addressed and sought to shape was also, in important respects, an international one. Under the influence of social evolutionary conceptions and imperialist ideologies, the citizen the museum sought to fashion was envisaged as part of a trans-national community of European and white-settler societies bound together by an imperial unity of interests and global civic responsibilities deriving from their status as the most advanced and evolved representatives of humanity.

The museum, in short, was to teach the lessons and responsibilities of progress and, in doing so, to help form an international citizenry that would be alert to the importance of the historical civilising mission with which it was charged. The emphasis of 'the new museum idea' fell on the role of ethnological collections and museums of natural history in forming a sense of mission and identity among those who, by virtue of their heredity, were charged with the obligation of keeping the progressive blood-line of European stock free from eugenic degeneration, while also civilising colonised peoples as their potential allowed. The role of the museum was

> to instruct the public in the part that inherited traits, character, virtues, vices, capabilities, temper, diseases, play in the destinies of men (cit. Coombes, 1988: 62).

If this provided for the construction of a trans-national community — a Victorian ecumene as Carol Breckenridge (1989) has called it — it also played a significant role in seeking to recruit the newly enfranchised working classes in support of imperialist sentiments and projects and, by so doing, to weaken their attachment to socialist ideas and political movements.

Perhaps the most lasting legacy of this period, however, derived from the importance it attached to the museum's potential to shape citizens-in-the-making. For it was only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the child became a significant object of attention for museums. Prior to this period, no special effort had been made to attract children to museums — to the contrary, they had often been regarded as a nuisance — just as no special provision had been made for them if they did visit. The last quarter of the 19th century witnessed a dramatic reversal of this tendency, with museums of natural history frequently leading the way. Some examples of this tendency are:

1, In the United States, the inclusion of children within the museum's civic responsibilities was signalled by the museum of the Boston Society of Natural History when, in the 1880s, it established a Teachers School of Science through which, by training teachers in the moral lessons which might be derived from the study of natural history, those lessons were to be carried into the classroom (Kohlstedt, 1979);

2, The American Museum of Natural History became a part of a program of public civics providing the children of New York with a popular schooling in the evolutionary messages of natural history (Sloan, 1980);

3, In Britain, the Education Act of 1902 made provision for time spent in museums by children accompanied by their teachers to count as time spent in school — a step which led to museums placing a new stress on schools programs not only in Britain but throughout the Empire; and

4, The education programs of the Queensland Museum date from the same period. Carried here by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the idea that museums should serve as an instrument for schooling children in the lessons of civics was put into great effect under the directorship of Dr Ronald Hamlyn-Harris.

Expanding Civic Horizons

There were, however, other tendencies over this period worth highlighting:

1, The first, in the context of first-wave feminism, concerns criticisms of the museum for its failure either to address women or to accord adequate attention to displaying women's art and culture. The most influential developments here were largely American. The Women's Art Museum Association, established in the 1870s, played an important role (McCarthy, 1991). Women's influence on the early American heritage movement was important in ensuring that both the public and domestic activities of women would be seen as worthy of historical commemoration (Hosmer, 1965). The major symbol of women's claims to be accorded equal representational status with men, however, was The Woman's Building in the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. From today's perspective, the display of women's culture seems limited given its tendency to reinforce the notion of separate spheres by focusing its portrayal of women's achievements on the arts of the domestic sphere (Weimann, 1981). The grounds on which this challenge was made, however, had considerable radical potential. The arguments which American feminists used to argue their case for including women's art and culture in exhibitions and museums was that, since these claimed to offer an encyclopaedic coverage of world culture, they could hardly afford to neglect the contributions of half the world's population (Greenhalgh, 1988). By pushing their universalist claims to their logical conclusions, first-wave feminists targeted museums and exhibitions as test sites for arguing and developing principles of equal cultural rights for women. In these ways, America's first-wave feminists anticipated and provided a model for other social movements which have taken museums and exhibitions to task for their exclusions and their hierarchical rankings of peoples and their cultures; and

2, The folk-museum movement had similar consequences in extending the range of what was thought of as representable. First developed in Scandinavia, mainly in association with nationalist movements, and subsequently developed in America, folk museums invested historical significance in the everyday economic and cultural activities of ordinary people. The folk museum's concentration on preservation and exhibition of past or disappearing rural ways of life at the expense of contemporary urban and industrial ones has been criticised for promoting a nostalgic idealisation of the past. Mark Sandberg reassesed this argument. The folk museum, he suggests, offered its largely urbanised visitors less a nostalgic idealisation of the past than an opportunity to manage the losses of modernity by portraying rural pasts in forms which made them instantly accessible and knowable to an increasingly mobile modern gaze. The folk museum, Sandberg suggests, made the past picturable in much the same way that a whole multitude of worlds was made available to the gaze of the modern city-dweller by the cinema (Sandberg, 1994). Whatever their precise significance at the time, however, the subsequent influence of folk museums has been considerable. They have prompted a significant enlargement of the frames of reference of all museums so that, today, a concern with everyday cultures and customs is evident in most museum types. Folk museums have also been partly responsible for that broadening of the concept of what a museum is that lies behind such modern museum forms as the living-history museum or the eco museum.

However, these are largely post-war developments. In the early 20th century, museums did not significantly change the understandings of their civic responsibilities that they had inherited from the 19th century. Changes were evident in some areas of museum display. In anthropology, Franz Boas effectively challenged the evolutionary assumptions which had justified the display of colonised indigenous peoples as 'primitive'. However, this affected only a small number of museums. For the greater part, western conceptions of progress continued to provide the organising categories for most museum displays in anthropology, natural history, and the history of science, medicine and technology, through into the 1950s.

Civic Managerialism

Perhaps the most significant pre-war changes concern the museums' responsibilities to visitors. The crucial developments originated in America where the nature and tasks of museum administration were increasingly posed in terms borrowed from the new language of scientific management. This was especially true of the role which the more go-ahead museums accorded social science surveys of their visitors as a necessary means of discharging their civic responsibilities.

The civilising mission accorded museums in the various 19th century conceptions of their civic function meant that, even at this time,

museum administrators were interested in the social composition of the visitor public. However, information on these matters was never collected in anything other than an impressionistic way. A typical method was to count visitors over bank-holiday periods and weekends and, since these were the most popular times for working-class visitors, to use these figures as a rough measure of how effectively the 'civilising effect' of museums was being distributed throughout the population (see Greenwood, 1888, for a summary of information of this type). In the 1920s and 1930s, however, and especially in America, social science surveys were increasingly used to monitor both the social contexts in which people visited museums and their patterns of behaviour when in the museum. Radically behaviourist in orientation, the visitor survey formed part of a new ethos of museum management which envisaged the visitor less as a citizen with rights than as a passive recipient of the museum's pedagogic message. The resulting orientation — Neil Harris calls it one of 'authoritarian experimentalism' (Harris, 1990) — was one in which a more detailed knowledge of visitor behaviour was sought in order that the museum environment might be so designed as to facilitate the visitor's instruction and thus enhance the museum's ability to transmit civic virtue to the citizen.

Yet this authoritarian and managerialist orientation was often combined with a fiercely populist understanding of the museum's duty to 'the people'. The result was often a quite savage indictment of museums for their failure to serve the population as a whole. In his *Plan for a New Museum*, John Cotton Dana chastised old-fashioned art museums for allowing themselves to have been captured as little more than fashion centres for elite society. In their place, he proposed 'institutes of visual instruction' which, through the use of social science surveys, were to seek to achieve 'returns for their cost' that are 'in good degree positive, definite, visible, measurable' (Dana, 1920: 13). This involved a highly detailed customising of the museum environment, designing every aspect of the visitor's experience in order to give rise to planned and definite effects. The business of the art museum is no longer 'to evoke wonder in the casual observer, or to arouse the admiration and pride of fellow citizens or the astonishment and envy of citizens of other cities' (Dana, 1920: 22) but is rather to be 'a new museum of the definitely useful, teaching type' (Dana, 1920: 28).

T.R. Adams strikes a similar note in *The Civic Value of Museums*. Noting that 'the control, discipline, and measurement of the museum visitor still eludes the science of pedagogy' so that the 'crowds that wander through museum halls, looking where they like and conversing as they please, are as foot-loose as the street philosophers of ancient Athens' (Adams, 1937: 13), he looks forward to a situation in which a closer knowledge of visitor habits will allow the museum to fulfil its civic role more effectively. He is in no doubt, in the case of art museums, with regard to what this civic role is or should be. 'The responsibility of an art museum in a democracy,' he asserts, 'is primarily to determine what shall be considered art by the general public' (Adams, 1937: 20). The assumption that the mass of people might be able to form their own views on such matters is, he suggests, 'something of a polite fiction' (Adams, 1937: 20). Modern democracy is based on the principles of the division of labour so that 'experts are expected to guide popular judgement in the understanding of art in somewhat the same way as doctors might advise in matters of public health' (Adams, 1937: 19-20).

'The ordinary citizen' then, 'requires strong guidance in order to build up his cultural tastes, and he looks to the institution possessing the greatest social prestige for this guidance' (Adams, 1937: 20). To offer such guidance, however, art museums must contrive to manage the museum's space and the visitor's experience in the closest possible detail to maximise the amount and value of the guidance the visitor receives:

> The larger and more richly stored the museum is, the greater the need for an effective plan of guidance for the average visitor. Otherwise, invisible barriers are put up against the general public. Though the physical doors of the museum remain open, the uninformed visitor finds himself at loose in a labyrinth of culture to which he lacks the secret. The minority who come armed with previous knowledge receive too great a proportion of the benefits of museum education. (Adams, 1937: 31).

We can see, in this passage, how, although the premises for the didacticism which Adams espouses are clearly authoritarian, they nonetheless offer a basis from which museums can be criticised for falling short of their civic responsibilities if it is evident that they are monopolised by particular sections of the population. In a later study, Adams suggested that this was precisely what had happened to America's major metropolitan art museums. He argued that these conducted their affairs as though the 'right to appreciate aesthetic qualities' was 'a privilege of

wealth and leisure'. Art museums, he argued, 'set up barriers against the proper diffusion of improved standards of taste throughout a metropolitan area' (Adams, 1939: 62).

Post-war Developments: Access, Participation and Cultural Diversity

Adams's argument prefigures what has been an important and continuing aspect of museum critique in the post-war period. In 1969, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel published their influential study *For the Love of Art*. Based on a statistical survey of the social backgrounds of art museum visitors in a range of European countries, this study showed that it was indeed true that such museums were most regularly used by members of the professional classes with high educational qualifications and hardly at all by manual workers. Bourdieu and Darbel suggested, in terms similar to those proposed by Adams, that this was partly because most art museums made no effort to contextualise the art they exhibited. In thus assuming that their visitors would already have the kinds of cultural skills and knowledge — or 'cultural capital', as they called it — needed to understand the art displayed, Bourdieu and Darbel suggested that art museums effectively discriminated against those whose social and educational backgrounds had not effectively equipped them with such skills (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1969).

Similar patterns of visitation have been shown in a wide range of similar studies conducted in America, Australia and Britain (Dimaggio & Useem, 1978; Bennett & Frow, 1991; and Bennett, 1994). The result is a now commanding body of literature which highlights an important contradiction in the functioning of the modern museum. It has been important throughout the modern period that the museum, as a public and civic institution, should be as accessible as possible to all citizens. However, studies following Bourdieu's and Darbel's work suggest that the museum's capacity to perform a genuine civic role in modern mass democracies where everyone is to count as a citizen, and on equal terms, is limited by important structural restrictions placed on its capacity to reach or appeal to a significant percentage of the population. Indeed, and especially in the case of art museums, such evidence is sometimes interpreted to suggest that, far from serving a general public and civic function, such institutions now serve mainly to symbolise social distinctions within an increasingly homogeneous population. They do so by providing a context in which those who visit art museums regularly can establish that they are, culturally, a cut above the rest of the population.

Post-war responses to such criticisms, however, have not been cast in the mould of the authoritarian didacticism that Adams espoused in the 1930s. The regret they have occasioned has been less that the efficiency of the public museum as an instrument for guiding public taste has been impaired because of its inability to reach beyond the more educated sections of the population. Rather, it has been that those who are denied effective access to museums — whether it be for physical, intellectual or cultural reasons — are, at the same time, being denied their cultural rights as citizens. This is an important difference. For Adams, the monopolisation of museums by social elites entailed that they must fail in their civic duty to instruct and guide public taste and knowledge. In interpreting similar evidence over the period since the 1960s, by contrast, the stress has been placed on the barriers which impede all citizens from having equal rights of access to the cultural resources of museums and on how to remove those barriers to translate the principles of equality of cultural rights into practice.

It has been through the pursuit of this new access and equity rubric of citizenship that the fourth of the principles governing modern understandings of the relations between museums and citizenship has been developed. This consists in the belief that the cultures of all groups within a society should be represented within museums, and be accorded equal worth and value. In previous periods, the citizen's right of access was a right of access to the exemplary forms of art, culture and knowledge that the museum deemed appropriate to make available. From the French Revolution to the authoritarian didacticism of Adams, the museum remained, as Pommier has put it, a 'sanctuary of the example'. It remained a place in which the citizen was to be improved though exposure to examples of civic virtue, to the morally improving influence of high art or to the models of progress represented by the most evolved types of humanity. However, this entailed an equivalent devaluation of all persons and culture not accorded such an exemplary status — of women in relation to men, of colonised peoples in relation to Europeans, of ordinary and everyday forms of culture in relation to the officially canonised arts.

Perhaps the most distinctive recent changes to our understanding of the civic role of museums, have been the challenges to the museum's con-

ception as a 'sanctuary of the example'. The impetus for such challenges has come from two main sources:

1, An important role has been played by research of the kind initiated by Bourdieu and Darbel. For one conclusion to be drawn from the evidence suggesting that significant cultural barriers impede broadly-based patterns of social access to museums is to propose that those barriers might be removed by requiring that museums cater equally to the cultural interests and preferences of all sections of the population rather than concentrating on elite forms of art and history which have conventionally been accorded exemplary status. It is arguments of this kind that have lain behind the much greater attention that is paid to everyday social history in history museums and to the popular arts in art museums. Such changing practices have also entailed a significant revaluation of the role of the curator. For Adams, the job of the curator was to act as an arbiter of public taste, guiding it through the selection of exemplary works of art. Although such conceptions remain, the more contemporary understanding of the curator's role is likely to see it as a facilitative one, ensuring that different cultures and values make a claim on the museum's space and the right to be shown there, rather than installing simply the one canonical version of art, history or science; and

2, The case for a reformed agenda of citizenship has also been pressed with most force and effect by the variety of social movements which, since the 1970s, have been active in fuelling those criticisms of the museum associated with the new museology. The women's movement has led the way here, returning to the lessons of first-wave feminism to remind museums that their claims to universality entail greater attention to women's art and culture. However, similar arguments have been pressed, and with equal vigour, on behalf of the cultures of the working-classes, the minority ethnic communities and First Peoples. Irit Rogoff offers a convenient summary of the cumulative impact of these developments:

> Over the past twenty years a broad range of critical analyses have converged on the museum, unmasking the structures, rituals, and procedures by which the relations between objects, bodies of knowledge, and processes of ideological persuasion are enacted. The critical analysis of the museum as the site of actively disseminated hegemonic culture has taken place within several overall categories focusing .... on issues of classification and ordering, on the links between collecting and ideology, on the ability of modes of representation to manage cultural consciousness, and on a recognition of the absences and exclusions that museums practice. (Rogoff, 1994: 232).

Museums now have a much less singular conception of their civic roles. The identities they seek to organise are now likely to be plural and non-hierarchical in ways which recognise the class, ethnic, gender and sexual divisions within the population. Rather than being 'sanctuaries of the example', museums are now perhaps better thought of as sanctuaries of *examples*. They are places where different artefacts fulfil different exemplary functions for different social groups rather than shrines for the universally normative example intended to serve as a model for all citizens.

MUSEUMS AND CITIZENSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

In the first issue of *The Australian Quarterly Journal of Theology, Literature and Science*, an anonymous correspondent urged that an Australian Museum be established to

> show that Australia is not occupied by a handful of felons or a few poor needy adventurers, anxious only for the accumulation of wealth, but that the seeds of a great Nation are sown and are even now beginning to fructify — that a national feeling is springing up — that a fifth continent is gradually but rapidly advancing to the lists as a competitor in the race for honour and for fame ... (Anon, 1828: 62).

The sentiment was somewhat atypical. Although, from the earliest European arrivals, collections of Australian flora and fauna played an important role in nourishing a sense of Australian distinctiveness, that distinctiveness was not usually conceived in national terms. From their origins in the 1820s and 1830s and into the early 20th century, Australia's major museums were mainly colonial in conception and functioning. By the 1890s, each of the States had established a museum (for brief histories of the major State museums of South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, see, respectively, Hale, 1956; Mather, 1986; Prescott, 1979; and Strahan, 1979). In terms of their governance, these museums were firmly integrated into the differentiated State-specific colonial administrations of the period. So far as the identities they sought to nurture and develop were concerned, the concepts of citizenship informing the practices of these museums were more imperial than nationalist in conception.

The change toward a more clearly nationalist conception of the role Australian collecting institutions might play in helping form a sense of common identity and heritage on the part of a citizenry seen as national did not come until after the Great War. If the Australian War Memorial

was the most obvious symbol of this change, so it has also — in more recent times — come to be regarded as symbolising the limitations of the ways in which, in the inter-war years and though into the 1950s, museums envisaged both the identity and composition of the citizenry they sought to address and to fashion. The Memorial has been the subject of more than one critique which has highlighted the singular, largely masculinist and wholly white and European, conceptions of 'the Australian' which, until recently, have informed its design, its displays and its public rhetorics (Inglis, 1985). These critiques have been part of a process through which museums have been called on to revise their policies and practices in order to help shape a more plural and differentiated set of civic identities that will be appropriate to the needs of a multicultural society, alert to gender differences and mindful of the distinctive claims and needs of indigenous Australians.

These, then, in the briefest of outline, are the major historical shifts relating to the ways in which the civic roles and functions of museums have been understood and debated in Australia. As such, they have provided the contexts in which European and American conceptions of museums and their civic tasks have been drawn on and, in being applied locally, subjected to new interpretations and inflections. There have been a number of distinctive Australian additions to the lexicons of museums and citizenship we have reviewed so far. It is to a fuller delineation of these that we now turn.

Citizens of Empire

However much their establishment may have been prompted by proto-nationalist sentiments, the initial impetus for Australia's early museums was as much practical as symbolic. While emerging civic pride was a factor in the considerations of the literary, philosophical and scientific societies which typically provided the bases from which the early museums developed, the focus on natural history collections which characterised these museums was primarily a response to the need to identify and catalogue the natural resources of the continent. In part, this entailed a concentration on the 'rare and curious' — or, more accurately, on what appeared rare and curious when viewed from the perspective of European systems of classification. In this respect the practices of Australian museums were governed by the structures of colonial science (Kohlstedt, 1983; MacLeod, 1982). Their role was to collect the new flora and fauna of Australia and then to send specimens of these to the centres of metropolitan science — most notably, the British Museum (Rupke, 1994) — for classification and interpretation. However, in common with the trend in Europe where, since the late 18th century, natural history collections had increasingly been governed by the practical interests of the emerging middle classes (Pomian, 1990), Australia's early museums were also guided by a more utilitarian interest in identifying those resources which might prove of commercial value.

While, from the outset, these museums were established as public institutions, they were largely the preserve of amateur gentlemen scientists (Anderson, 1993). While not formally excluding working class men and women, they made little attempt to attract them. Similarly, although admitting 'lady' visitors, these played little if any role in the governance of museums while Aborigines were admitted only as dead specimens. A rather different pattern was established by the Mechanics Institutes that were established over roughly the same period, beginning in 1827 and reaching their hey-day in the 1850s and 1860s (Candy & Laurent, 1994). These often had museums and libraries attached to them and made a greater effort to reach all social classes. By the 1850s, there was an effective national network of Mechanics Institutes whose role in the early formation of a public culture in Australia cannot be overestimated. However, as Philip Candy (1994: 2-3) points out, it was a public culture that fostered a sense more of an imperial than of a national community. This was mainly because the Australian Institutes formed part of a world-wide colonial network that had common roots in the English Mechanics Institutes movement.

This network also comprised one of the routes through which, from the mid-century period, the 'museum idea' was translated to the Australian context. The success of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the subsequent development of the South Kensington Museum with its open-door policy and active interest in attracting working-class visitors were frequently cited as models prompting similar orientations in Australia's major State museums. Early experiments in the development of 'outreach systems' placed Australia at the forefront of international developments in this area. William Stanley Jevons's involvements in such Australian experiments substantially influenced his later writings. In the late 19th century he advocated the role

which museums might play in multiplying culture's utility by making cultural resources more generally available to the whole population (Jevons, 1883).

The second half of the 19th century saw a greater stress placed on the public educational functions of Australian museums. Sally Kohlstedt (1983) argued that this stress placed particular emphasis on the educational value of natural history which remained the single most important collecting focus in Australian institutions. After 1860 such collections were increasingly complemented by ethnological collections focusing on the remains and material culture of Australia's Aboriginal peoples. The organisation of the relations between such ethnological collections and natural history displays increasingly governed the educational and civic functions of the museums.

Forming a National Citizenry

These, then, are some of the considerations relevant to the context in which 'the new museum idea' — actively promoted by both the Museums Association and the British Association for the Advancement of Science — was articulated to museum policies and practices in late 19th- and early 20th-century Australia. This imperial frame of reference was partly responsible for the relative lack of interest that museums showed in non-Aboriginal artefacts of Australian history. Although this lack of a distinctively national-historical focus on the part of Australian museums is, by now, a common observation (Anderson, 1993; Bennett, 1988), the available accounts differ in explanations for this. Two might usefully be commented on here:

1, Since they did not conform to the model of significant historical events as suggested by Eurocentric norms, the major episodes of Australian history did not seem worthy of preservation or commemoration. They were, accordingly, overlooked, viewed as devoid of historical significance; and

2, The prevailing view of the protocols which history needed to observe in order to establish itself as a discipline may also have been a contributory factor (Healy, 1994). As a way of distinguishing itself from the kinds of interest in historical artefacts exhibited by amateur forms of antiquarianism, Healy argues, history eschewed artefactual sources in favour of written documents.

Whatever the causes the effect was palpable enough: even as late as 1933 a survey commissioned by the Museums Association was able to comment pointedly on the virtual absence of historical collections or displays relating to the period since 1788 (Markham & Richards, 1933).

The most significant corrective to this tendency was the development of the Australian War Memorial from 1917, when Bean first mooted the proposal, to 1941, when the Memorial opened. It would be a mistake, however, to view the development of the Memorial in isolation. Rather, its significance is properly appreciated only when seen as a national capping of broadly-based and nation-wide initiatives — the military mementos displayed in small local museums, the erection of war memorials in virtually all towns and cities — through which a more clearly nationalistic public historical sphere was formed. Truly a 'sanctuary of the example', the model citizen implied by the Memorial was male and military, a serviceman. Though still fond of the ties which bound him to England, he was undeniably Australian, and he was democratic.

There seems, however, to have been relatively little parallel innovation in the inter-war period on the part of the major State museums. Yet it is hard to assess whether this is a reliable judgement. It is now over a decade since John Mulvaney (1982/3) complained of the inadequacy of available research into the history of Australian museums. If the intervening period has witnessed a flurry of work towards correcting this situation, scarcely any has related to the inter-war years. The impression conveyed by such work as has been done, however, suggests that there was little significant change in the principles regulating natural history and ethnological museum displays which continued to be dominated by evolution into the 1950s.

Disaggregating the Nation

It is a singular and remarkable fact that, as Jane Spring puts it, '86% of the 237 museums for which dates are known were established after 1960' (Spring, 1994: 1). Perhaps even more remarkable, 46% of Australia's existing museums were established in the 1980s. There is also no doubting where the balance of this growth has been. The past thirty years has seen the establishment of what now amounts to a significant number of museums focussing on the social, cultural and technological history of 19th- and 20th-century Australia.

These museums have been of various types:

1, Some have been established as national institutions: the Australian National Maritime

Museum and, even though it seems destined to remain a 'virtual reality' for some time to come, the Museum of Australia;

2, Others have been State initiatives: the Powerhouse Museum, Hyde Park Barracks, and the museums of the History Trust of South Australia, for example,

3, Some have been the result of private initiative: the Stockmans Hall of Fame and Timbertown, for example;

4, Others have involved the introduction of new museum types into the Australian context: the living-history orientation of Sovereign Hill, for example, or the construction of the Living Museum of the West in accordance with the principles of the ecomuseum,

5, Some have been specific-issue museums focusing on a specific industry or way of life, such as the Woodworks Museum at Gympie; and

6, Others have been dedicated to the histories of specific groups or communities — the Jewish Museums in Melbourne and Sydney and Melbourne's Chinese Museum, for example.

This diversity of museum types has contributed to the disaggregation of those earlier singular conceptions of Australian cultural and civic identity. It is, however, only over the past decade or so that a pluralising and differentiating civic function has become an accepted policy objective of the major public museums. Two reports of inquiries into museums and national collections and the administration of the National Estate remain the major landmark policy documents of the post-war period (*Report of the National Estate*, 1974; *Museums in Australia*, 1975). As such, they signalled a clear commitment to the view that museums and heritage institutions more generally should organise and represent a more open and democratic version of the national past, one that would be generally inclusive of all sections of the population and so able to address and acknowledge their equal worth as citizens. Even so, the leitmotif of these documents was less one of the active promotion of diversity than one which, in tune with the new nationalism of the 1970s, sought to recognise the disparate historical interests and values of different sections of the population while forging these into a new unifying national mythos. This was most evident in the place accorded Aboriginal culture within both reports as Aboriginal claims to difference and autonomy were overridden. The newly-discovered antiquity of Aboriginal history and culture were accorded the role of anchoring the fledging Australian national past into a longer historical context.

The predominating tendency over the past decade has been away from the notion that museums should be concerned to help fashion a national citizenry by so interpreting and displaying natural, scientific and cultural artefacts as to suggest a single or even privileged national identity. The effective advocacy of human rights by international organisations such as UNESCO and ICOM; the domestic and international influence of social movements, especially of women and First Peoples; the increasing importance of the policy agendas of multiculturalism within Australia; and the influence of post-modernist arguments and debates: all have tended in the direction of stressing a new civic function for museums, one orientated to schooling a population into tolerance of, and respect for, diversity.

These tendencies are not unique to museums. A looser, more pliable relation to questions concerning the relations between culture, identity and citizenship has been evident across all official forms of national culture (Cochrane & Goodman, 1988) just as an affirmation of the virtues of cultural hybridisation can also be found in commercial popular culture (Turner, 1994). If these tendencies are present in museums, this is not to say that they are the only such tendencies or that they can count on a future in which their ascendancy will be unimpeded. To the contrary, in *Things that Matter*, the 1994 cultural policy statement of the Liberal Party, the stress placed on the need to reinvent a unifying set of national core values serves as a reminder that opinion on these matters is still divided.

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